



August 27, 2021
Feast of St. Monica

Updated Letter Regarding 2021-2022 School Year and COVID-19 Policies

Dear Catholic School Faculty, Staff, and Families,

In late July, a letter was sent providing Diocesan recommendations and policies regarding the 2021-2022 school year and COVID-19. We promised to continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in our Diocese as we begin this school year. Our goal has been and continues to be keeping our students in our Catholic schools for in-person learning; we believe that this best supports the formation and education of our young people. We must also acknowledge the fact that this virus continues to present challenges to our community, is unpredictable, and, at times, is very destructive. Therefore, we are providing additional policies at this time:

- **Masks are strongly recommended and may be mandated when local circumstances are considered.** We continue to join the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and strongly recommend that students, faculty, and staff who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask. **We support individual schools as they decide to create policies which may require masks for some or all indoor spaces based on local conditions.** Masks may be required for a period of time in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in a school or community, or for any reason in which a local health department deems it to be necessary due to local circumstances.

- **Schools must provide for social distancing of at least 3 feet between desks, as possible.** Earlier this month, the ODH has issued new guidelines for students and adults who are exposed to COVID-19 in a classroom setting. As part of the guidance, when all three prevention measures are in place including the use of a mask, physical distancing of at least 3 feet between desks, and other prevention policies (i.e. protocols for cleaning, identification of those experiencing symptoms, etc.) students and adults may not need to quarantine. In many cases, social distancing continues to be a safe, effective, and unobtrusive prevention measure.

- **Proper quarantine procedures have been updated and must be followed.**

As part of the previously mentioned ODH guidelines, students and adults who are unvaccinated and unmasked are required to quarantine for a minimum of 7 days with a negative COVID-19 test or quarantine for 10 days without a test, following exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual at school. **Those who are masked, regardless of vaccination status, will be permitted to remain in school and participate in sports or extracurricular activities provided they follow the ODH guidelines.**

An individual school's quarantine policy cannot be more permissive than the state's published policy. The policy along with a flow chart can be found on the ODH's website or by clicking the following link: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/media-center/odh-news-releases/odh-news-release-08-05-21>

Other policies including sanitation procedures, occupancy, required masking on public transportation (including school busses), and encouraging but not mandating vaccines for eligible individuals at this time, have not changed from what we communicated on July 31, 2021.

Our Catholic school communities continue to come together with health leaders, community leaders, and our school families, to adjust nimbly to the pandemic's ever-changing conditions. Thank you for your continued perseverance and fortitude. This approach has, since March of 2020, enabled Catholic schools to navigate the pandemic's challenges and provide the best possible education and formation. We will continue to monitor the situation across our Diocese.

In Our Lady,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Daniels", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Daniels
Senior Director